

Paying for what councils do

The following are some of the main ways councils raise money.

Rates and levies

Each year property owners must pay rates to their local council. The amount they pay is determined by the 'rate' (or cents per dollar) the council applies to the property valuation. Councils can also charge a levy for services provided such as water supply, sewerage services and garbage collection.

Grants and subsidies

Councils receive grants or subsidies from the State and Federal Governments that usually represent a percentage of the cost of a project. Sometimes, the council can decide how it will spend the grant. At other times, the grant is for a specific purpose. For example, a road grant must be used for roadwork. Councils also receive money to help them meet some of the costs of providing important infrastructure such as water supply and showground facilities.

Fees and charges

Some council services involve a fee. These include dog registrations, public swimming pool fees, rubbish tip charges, and council hall hire.

Loans

Like everyone else, councils can borrow money for major projects.

What role does the Department play?

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation's role is to create better communities and a better quality of life for the people of Queensland. To achieve this, the Department:

- Drafts the legislation under which councils must operate (i.e. the *Local Government Act 1993*).
- Provides more than \$800 million in funding for councils to build infrastructure and provide services necessary for the growth and liveability of the community.

Councils have full responsibility and autonomy to manage local issues with their community such as barking dogs, garbage collection, local roads, libraries and rates.

Have your say

Councils represent the interests of everyone in the community, so it is important for councils to work together with their ratepayers to decide what is needed. There are many ways you can participate, even if you are not a councillor or an employee of council. You can attend council meetings, inspect public documents such as the corporate plan, or discuss your ideas with your local councillor.

Contact your council to see how you can help influence the growth and prosperity of your community.

Further information

The best way to find out more information about how your council works for you is by contacting them directly or by visiting their website. You can also:

- Obtain a copy of your council's corporate plan and annual report.
- Ask your council for any information produced for residents about the services they provide and the decisions they make.
- Attend a council meeting.
- Talk to your Councillor or council staff about an issue that affects you.
- Check with your council libraries about books and publications on local government.

For a complete list of all 73 councils across Queensland and their contact details, visit www.localgovernment.qld.gov.au.



Queensland Government

Department of Local Government,
Sport and Recreation

How your council works for you



Queensland Government

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Three spheres of government

There are three spheres of government in Australia: Federal, State (Territory) and Local. Sometimes their duties overlap and, at other times, they are quite separate.

Federal Government

- Decides on matters that affect the whole country.
- Also called the Commonwealth Government.
- The leader is the Prime Minister.

State Government

- Decides on matters that affect each state.
- Is called the Territory Government in the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory.
- The leader is the Premier/Chief Minister.

Local Government

- An individual local government is called a council.
- Each council plays an important role in improving the liveability and sustainability of our communities by providing many of the services and facilities used every day.
- The leader is the Mayor.

Councils are set up by state legislation. In Queensland, their powers come mainly from the *Local Government Act 1993*, which is administered by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation (Queensland Government).

Councils at work

In Queensland, there are 73 councils that represent the interests of the communities within their local government area. Their role is to decide facilities and services, and make local laws to help provide a safe and orderly community.

Traditionally councils have provided services such as roads, water supply and sewerage, but more and more, councils are now involved in the social, economic and cultural development of their communities and in improving the liveability, sustainability and prosperity of their regions.

Promoting economic development

Councils encourage and attract industry, which creates jobs for local people.

Building infrastructure for now and the future

Queensland councils own and manage public infrastructure worth at least \$41 billion. While it is council's responsibility to manage this, the Queensland and Federal Governments may provide funding to councils to help them implement projects, including:

- Roads, bridges, footpaths and bikeways.
- Sewerage collection and treatment.
- Treatment and distribution of water for domestic and industrial use.
- Flood control.
- Other infrastructure as needed, such as gas supply and airports.

Planning, environment and health

Councils are responsible for regulating activities that affect the quality of the environment and contribute to the overall health of the community, including:

- Regulation of air, noise and water.
- Land use planning.
- Waste disposal.
- Control of declared pests and noxious weeds.
- Building approvals.

Community Services

Councils work with their communities to provide a range of services to enhance social well-being and encourage community involvement, including:

- Child care centres, family day care schemes and respite services.

- Arts, cultural and heritage activities.
- Library services, public housing and community halls.
- Sporting and recreational facilities.
- Transport services.

Roles and Responsibilities

Local governments are multi-million dollar businesses, and as such, councils need to be strategic in their approach, engaging with the people in the local government area to ensure decisions mirror community needs and interests. Councils function as a Board of Directors, setting the strategic direction of the local government, and then designing policies and strategies to achieve that direction.

Mayor

The mayor presides at council meetings and represents the council on formal occasions. The mayor makes sure the council's Chief Executive Officer carries out council decisions.

Councillors

Councillors represent the interests of everyone in the community. Their role is to make decisions about facilities and services for the local area and make local laws to help provide a safe and orderly community. Councillors have regular meetings to make decisions and to discuss local issues.

Chief Executive Officer

Every council employs a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is the link between the elected councillors and its employees. The CEO's job is to implement council policies and decisions, manage council operations and keep councillors informed.

Employees

To implement the decisions of councillors, Queensland's 73 councils employ more than 34,000 employees in occupations such as accountants, animal control officers, community development officers, engineers, environmental health officers, gardeners, librarians, planners and road workers.